

SUPPORTING CLEAN AIR IN CENTRAL CALIFORNIA



Central California Air Quality Coalition

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Major air quality studies to provide vital data to improve health of Californians

Facing stubborn air quality challenges in Northern and Central California, a coalition of agriculture, industry, oil, energy, state, federal and local air quality agencies has joined forces to help fund and conduct two of the most comprehensive air quality studies ever undertaken. On June 5, the Central California Air Quality Coalition officially launches the California Regional PM₁₀/PM_{2.5} Air Quality and Central California Ozone Studies. Combined, these landmark research projects will invest an unprecedented \$44.5 million toward improving current understanding of air pollution.

The studies are being initiated just as the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency is expected to reclassify the Valley's air quality from serious to severe non-attainment of the federal ground-level ozone standard. Despite significant air quality improvements, the San Joaquin Valley was unable to meet this mandate by the November 1999 deadline. The information from the studies will ensure further progress toward meeting this health-based standard in order to protect public health.

The study data will:

- Provide a sound scientific foundation for future air quality plans.
- Help explain why the region does not meet state and federal clean air goals and what additional steps may be necessary in the future.
- Be crucial in developing additional emission control measures in order to attain and maintain air quality health standards in the Bay Area, Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley.

California Regional PM₁₀/PM_{2.5} Air Quality Study

Northern and Central California faces a significant challenge from airborne particles. These particles constitute a grave public health risk because they invade the respiratory system and can become lodged in the deep recesses of the lungs. Particulate matter has been documented to cause or aggravate respiratory disease such as bronchitis and asthma and is especially dangerous to children, the elderly and exercising adults.

To learn more about the nature of particulate matter, the coalition invested \$27.5 million to fund a comprehensive study that will conduct air quality measurements from the Pacific Ocean to the Mojave Desert from east to west, and north to south from the Sacramento Valley to the Tehachapi Mountains. In addition to 100 existing PM10 and 50 PM2.5 air monitoring sites operated by the California Air Resources Board (ARB) and local air districts, the study will gather data from 30 new locations. Among these is a 328-foot tower constructed at Angiola in southeast Kings County. The tower will measure air quality, winds, and temperature at several levels.

In addition to the Angiola tower, 13 sites will collect continuous data on winds and temperature from the surface up to one mile high in the atmosphere. A remotely piloted air ship that is the only one of its type in use for air monitoring purpose will also gather data. A detailed fact sheet on the unique 30-foot blimp is included in this media packet.

Through the use of this state-of-the-art monitoring network, the study will document the spatial distribution, temporal variation, chemical composition, and intensity of particulate matter concentrations. This will be accomplished in four different field campaigns, as detailed below.

- “ A long-term program from December 1999 through January 2001.
- “ A summer visibility program from July through September 2000.
- “ A fall episodic assessment in October and November 2000.
- “ A winter episodic study in December 2000 and January 2001.

The information from all the campaigns will then be used to evaluate and improve models that plot the causes of elevated particulate matter concentrations and the interaction between the emissions, area meteorology, and chemical processes. The models will play an integral role in developing future control strategies for particulate matter.

Central California Ozone Study

Exposure to ozone is a persistent and widespread health concern for millions of Californians. Commonly called smog, ozone is a strong irritant and can cause constriction of airways, forcing the respiratory system to work harder in order to provide oxygen. Short-term exposure to this oxidant can cause coughing, sore throat, and eye irritation. Like particulate matter, ozone can aggravate existing respiratory diseases, such as emphysema, bronchitis, and asthma.

The Central California Ozone Study is a \$17 million, multi-year effort to examine ozone formation and inter-region transport in Northern and Central California. Planning studies started in 1998 and field studies are scheduled to start this summer. Specifically, the study will provide emissions, meteorological and air quality data for use in developing and evaluating a photochemical model. As in the particulate matter study, the data will be used to develop effective emission control strategies.

To gather data, the study will utilize state of the science air monitoring and meteorological instruments at a total of 185 stations currently operated by the ARB and local air districts, as well as 31 new sites. In addition to the sites operated as part of the particulate matter study, 12 new sites will be added to measure winds and temperature in the upper atmosphere. Six aircraft will collect data during the study, including a Cessna 182 and a Piper Aztec, which will be present at the news conference.

Today's kick off is the culmination of nine years of collaborative planning and fund-raising efforts. The U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Interior, and Transportation joined the California Air Resources Board, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Energy Commission, Bay Area, Mendocino, Sacramento, San Joaquin, and San Luis Obispo air quality districts to comprise the public portion of the partnership. The Independent Oil Producer's Agency, Pacific Gas and Electric, Southern California Gas Company, Western States Petroleum Association, as well as the Nisei Farmer's League and other agricultural organizations represent the private portion of the coalition. The coalition's fund-raising and research efforts were supported and assisted by a number of legislators, both in Sacramento and on Capitol Hill. This collaborative approach to environmental management has already served as a model for future scientific studies in the United States

The California Regional PM10/PM2.5 Air Quality and the Central California Ozone Studies will provide vital information needed to protect the health and improve the quality of life for millions of California residents.

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